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ABSTRACT

A survey of the presidents and chief student personnel administrators at 54 Texas community college campuses was conducted in 1977 to determine if the Tomorrow's Higher Education Project (THE) model for student personnel programs could be implemented at the college level and whether such implementation would improve student personnel programs at Texas community colleges. The survey instrument used was designed to measure individual and institutional independent variables, such as academic field of preparation and the number of full-time equivalent students, and to provide forced-choice responses pertaining to the conceptualization of the THE model and its implementation at the respondents' institutions. Survey results, based on a 76% usable return rate, indicate that both types of independent variables had little effect on the administrators' evaluation of the THE model, that most administrators agreed with its basic concepts, and that most felt, although to a lesser extent, that the model could be implemented at their institutions. The survey report concludes with a list of recommendations for the implementation of the THE model at Texas community colleges. (JP)

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AN EVALUATION OF THE FUTURE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS: A GUIDE TO STUDENT
DEVELOPMENT FOR TOMORROW'S HIGHER EDUCATION BY CHIEF STUDENT
PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATORS IN TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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May, 1978

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By Richard Carman Jolly, Texas Tech University, May, 1978

Introduction

This study was designed to evaluate The Future of Student Affairs: A Guide to Student Development for Tomorrow's Higher Education. The evaluation was made by the chief student personnel administrators in Texas community colleges. This information was then used to determine the usefulness of this approach for the improvement of student personnel programs in Texas community colleges.

Background

The book, The Future of Student Affairs: A Guide to Student Development for Tomorrow's Higher Education, is the culmination of eight years of effort by the American College Personnel Association to produce a conceptual model for the practice of student personnel work in the future. Phase One of the Tomorrow's Higher Education Project (T.H.E.) produced Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education - A Return to the Academy in 1972 by Robert Brown. This monograph discusses the fundamental goals of higher education and projected its future based on a need for greater integration of academic and student affairs offices.

The American College Personnel Association has since sought reactions and recommendations to the Brown monograph from its members and the higher education community. The efforts have resulted in completion of Phase Two of the T.H.E. Project with the 1976 publication of The Future of Student Affairs: A Guide to Student Development for Tomorrow's Higher Education by Ted Miller and Judith Prince. The book is intended to serve as a model for student personnel programs utilizing the student development approach. It has two primary purposes. The first is an attempt to provide the basic principles of an integrated human development concept in higher education. The second purpose of the book is to discuss specific activities which can be used by student personnel administrators on their own campuses. Although the authors confess that the book may raise more questions than it can solve, they contend that the book attempts to provide more meaningful approaches to student personnel services for the future.

Need for the Study

There is a great need for improvement of the student personnel programs in American higher education. Student personnel workers have found it increasingly difficult to adequately respond to the needs of students. Modern technology has introduced numerous innovations which have changed, and will continue to change, our society. New changes in higher education such as the

"Open Door" policy in the community colleges have greatly influenced student personnel services. The doors are now open in the community colleges to students of a much wider variety of abilities, interests, and needs. Student personnel staff must now deal with many different types of students. This diversity increases the educator's professional responsibility with additional challenges for meeting student needs.

Many student personnel programs are not providing the types of services that are needed. This becomes more important as the accountability factor plays a greater role in today's higher education. The need for stronger student personnel programs is well documented in the literature.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study, all of which apply to the evaluation of the T.H.E. model by the chief student personnel administrators in Texas community colleges, are as follows:

1. To ascertain whether the Texas community college chief student personnel administrators concur with the basic principles as presented in the T.H.E. model.
2. To ascertain whether the Texas Community college chief student personnel administrators believe these basic principles presented in the T.H.E. model can be implemented at their institution.
3. To ascertain whether the T.H.E. model will be useful in the improvement of student personnel programs in Texas community colleges.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be used to deduce the chief student personnel administrators' evaluations of the T.H.E. model and, therefore, how useful the model will be in the improvement of student personnel programs in Texas community colleges. The professional qualification independent variables in these hypotheses refer to the administrators' academic field of preparation, highest degree earned, and years of professional student personnel experience. The institutional characteristic independent variables in these hypotheses refer to the number of years the institution has been in operation, and the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled for the spring semester of 1977.

- Ho₁. There will be no significant difference between the administrators' responses to the conceptualization of the T.H.E. model and professional qualifications.
- Ho₂. There will be no significant difference between the administrators' responses to the conceptualization of the T.H.E. model and institutional characteristics.

- Ho₃. There will be no significant difference between the administrators' responses to the implementation of the T.H.E. model and institutional characteristics.
- Ho₄. There will be no significant difference between the administrators' responses to the implementation of the T.H.E. model and institutional characteristics.
- Ho₅. There will be no significant difference between the administrators' responses to the conceptualization and implementation of the T.H.E. model.

Procedure

The community college chief student personnel administrators in the State of Texas were selected as the population for this study. There were 47 community college districts existing in various parts of the State of Texas at the time of this study. Some were multi-campus districts. Each of the campuses was treated as an individual college, making a total of 54 community college campuses in the study population.

The presidents and chief student personnel administrators of these 54 institutions were connected by mail in late 1976 regarding this study. In early January, copies of the T.H.E. model were mailed to the chief student personnel administrators from New York City. On February 1, 1977, the survey instrument was also mailed to these chief student personnel administrators. The instrument consisted of four major sections. Section I requested information to be used as independent variables, information such as academic field of preparation, highest earned degree, years of professional student personnel experience, years an institution had been in operation, and number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students in the Spring of 1977. Section II consisted of 27 items pertaining to the conceptualization of the T.H.E. model, while Section III contained 24 items inquiring about the implementation of the T.H.E. model at the respondent's institution. Section IV was optional and provided space for the respondent to make comments about the model. All items in Section II and III called for a forced choice response. These options ranged from "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Slightly Agree", "Slightly Disagree", "Disagree", to "Strongly Disagree". The instrument is included as Appendix.

A total of 85 percent response was received to the survey instrument for this study. However, only 76 percent provided usable information. The independent variables and item responses were recoded and subjected to statistical analysis. Frequency tables were constructed for both the raw frequency of occurrence and the frequency of occurrence as a percentage for all items on the survey instrument. The independent variables were compared to all items on the instrument by means of contingency tables with the computed Chi Square to determine if any relationships may exist. The means of the conceptualization and implementation responses were compared by t-tests to determine whether a significant difference between the two groups was evident.

General Conclusions

1. Most chief student personnel administrators in Texas community colleges did agree that there was a need for a new model in student personnel services such as the T.H.E. model.
2. Overall, the independent variables concerned with professional qualifications had little influence on the administrators' evaluations of the T.H.E. model. These qualifications were the field of academic preparation, highest earned degree, and number of years of professional student personnel experience.
3. Overall, the independent variables concerned with institutional characteristics had little influence on the administrators' evaluation of the T.H.E. model. These characteristics were the number of years an institution had been in operation, and the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled for the 1977 Spring Semester.
4. The majority of Texas community college chief student personnel administrators were in agreement with the basic principles in the T.H.E. model.
5. The majority of Texas community college chief student personnel administrators were in agreement that the basic principles of the T.H.E. model could be implemented at their institutions.
6. There was a higher level of agreement for the T.H.E. model's conceptualization than for its implementation according to Texas community college chief student personnel administrators.
7. The T.H.E. model can be useful in the improvement of Texas community college student personnel programs even though its conceptualization was rated slightly higher than its implementation.

Recommendations

General Recommendations

1. Since the Texas community college chief student personnel administrators indicated a favorable viewpoint toward the T.H.E. model, it is recommended that they become more familiar with its concepts and approaches.
2. It is recommended that the chief student personnel administrators in Texas community colleges consider incorporating the T.H.E. model into their program whenever feasible.
3. The chief student personnel administrators in Texas community colleges should allow sufficient time for staff and faculty to inspect and discuss the T.H.E. model.

4. The student body should have the opportunity to examine and react to the T.H.E. model and provide their input to the chief student personnel administrator in each of the Texas community colleges.
5. The chief student personnel administrators should provide information regarding the T.H.E. model for their supervisors and governing body in each of the Texas community colleges.
6. The Texas community college chief student personnel administrators should keep in mind that the T.H.E. model's conceptualization was rated with a higher level of agreement than its implementation when utilizing this approach.
7. Other student development models and information should be investigated by the Texas community colleges in addition to the T.H.E. approach.

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